

David Souers  
Friendship  
LD 208

## LD 208 An Act to Eliminate the 72-hour Waiting Period on Firearm Purchases

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, Members of the committee, I am David Souers. I live in Friendship, Maine. I am a retired healthcare facility architect from a family that owned, collected and used firearms as a hobby, and for recreation, target practice, hunting and protecting our agriculture from certain wildlife, in compliance with a variety of laws protecting ourselves and others for the types of firearms, locations and use.

I am testifying in opposition to LD 208.

The 72 hour waiting period on firearm purchases was passed during the 131st Maine Legislature for many good reasons, which I will not repeat as they are in the record and should be brought forward and consulted by the Judiciary Committee before acting on LD 208.

I will add some thoughts and comments from what I have observed regarding the deletion or liberalization of former gun safety laws which had once been in force, some existing for several generations or more. I have listened to the “gun lobby” in recent years, those who speak for liberalizing or eliminating our state gun safety laws. This has become an ongoing activity with the intent that there be absolutely no laws protecting the people of Maine from the dangers of unreliable, careless, abusive and intentional criminal use of firearms.

The Maine “gun lobby” for the most part aligns itself with the national “gun lobby” and with states, like Florida, who promote and establish the most liberal gun laws with no restrictions and no safety for the public. These states have some of the highest per capita gun deaths in the nation. States like Florida have liberalized their guns laws to the point where those armed with guns can shoot and kill unarmed people, often men and children making no deadly threats. These killers claim self defense and walk free with support in court and in public media from the “gun lobby”.

The Maine “gun lobby” claims that “guns in the hands of good guys will stop bad guys with guns”, and so they argue firearms must be in the hands of “good guys” without delay or restriction. However, they have never presented any evidence that this is true, including evidence that a 72 hour waiting causes the gun buyer to be a victim of a “bad guy”. Certainly they have not and cannot demonstrate that guns in the right hands saves more lives than are killed by firearms. Even where the “good guys”, like the police are present with their guns, they have not stopped the gun deaths at those locations. In too many cases, police have mistakenly killed unarmed or legal gun owners, who were presenting little or no indications of being lethally dangerous. There just is no evidence for “gun lobby” claims.

The Maine “gun lobby” has not advocated or implemented any safe guards in law or practice to deal with the increasing gun deaths in Maine. The rhetoric of the “gun lobby” is generally threatening, even proposing to use their firearms against those who bring up the topic of the alarming increase in gun deaths. Nationally, the gun Lobby” has criticized and made it difficult for doctors to discuss gun safety with patients. The Maine “gun lobby” could promote public and private discussion of gun safety at every opportunity, but they don’t.

The Maine “gun lobby” repeatedly claims that mental illness is the primary cause of gun violence, and that the state should address mental health services. I am not aware of a single bill from the “gun lobby” that addresses mental health with meaningful funding, facilities, physician training and development, methods and programs that would address mental stress and illness contributing to gun violence. There are likely other causes of gun violence including bullying, abuse, economic and social stress, poverty, public and private attitudes and fearful or threatening communications. The “gun lobby” clearly doesn’t want these issues studied and dealt with. Nationally these

discussions are shut down by the “gun lobby” and politicians who support the expansion of gun manufacturing and sales. They seem to depend on promoting fear and anger as a sales promotion tool. This development of fear and anger among people with firearms may be the single greatest contributor to gun violence. So, in fact, the “gun lobby” is correct in saying that “guns don’t kill, people do”. As long as people with guns kill, this is the single most important advertising tool for gun sales, as the “gun lobby” then claims more people need firearms without restrictions or gun safety programs to protect themselves from an industry perpetuated threat.

Presently, Maine’s 72 hour waiting period law has been suspended by the courts until it addresses lawsuits intended to overrule our 72 hour waiting period law. The Judiciary should consider setting aside or suspending LD 208 until the current lawsuits are decided in court.

I advocate that this LD 208 ought not to pass.